Islam and Futurology

What is the Islamic paradigm on; A.I, Robots, Mind-reading technologies and Transhumanism?

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We are living in the era of Artificial Intelligence, in which newer technologies are being produced. Technologies which make a believer question their core beliefs.

This booklet aims to give answers to some of these questions. Questions like;

Are A.I robots living beings?

Has the Quran challenge of 'creating a fly' been met?

Can technology (the Neuralink) let people see the unseen (ghayb)?

Are dreams part of the unseen any longer?

These are important questions many young Muslims are asking. The author gives answers from a Islamic Sunni point of view.

EBook: Islam and Futurology

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Chapter 1 - Intro:

200 years ago, if you spoke to a piece of glass, and saw a vision of someone in another part of the world. You would be accused of being a magician. Today this is a smartphone and it is called science and technology.

"Advanced technology becomes indistinguishable from Magic." - Arthur C Clarke, who was a Numerologist.

Muslims in the present and future have to rethink alot of classical issues due to technological advancements. These technologies are so powerful, that they delve into the Aqeedah (belief) issues, concepts such as our belief in; the Unseen (ghayb), the issue of magic, dreams, the issue of whether humans can create life (AI robots etc) etc.

In this booklet, I want to give an insight into; these technologies, their capabilities, and think of ways we can comprehend the Islamic texts on these controversial issues.

I will only mention technologies briefly, mentioning keywords which can be searched for on the internet. But my main focus in this booklet is to see how Muslims can perceive these issues and fit them into the Islamic paradigm.

But before the discussion on technology, I want to discuss Jinn and their relationship to electricity.

Chapter 2 - Jinn and Electricity:

Allah says:

"He created Jinn from a smokeless fire." (Quran 55:15)

Ibn Abbas said that Jinn are made from the essence (asl) of fire, which is a spark. "A spark" of electricity is what ignites a fuel - causing a fire.

If we agree that Jinn are made from electricity, we can understand alot of things about magic and technology resembling each other.

A magician hundreds of years ago, before the production of man-made electricity could see visions in glass. He could send letter communications at light speed through the Jinn. He could even fly with the help of the Jinn. But he had to sell his soul to the Jinn in exchange for these services through bowing to it, and sacrificing in its name etc.

Allah tells us; On the Day He will gather them altogether; "O Jinn, you did increase in misguidance many of the human race. And their allies from the humans will say; Our Maker, some of us used each other (the humans and Jinn both used each other for their own benefits.).. - Quran 6:128

And He says: The devil Jinns would give inspirations (wahy = secret pieces of information) to their human allies (Quran 6:121

If we understand these verses, it makes sense that since the "Enlightenment (Rennaisance) era", technology has evolved to resemble the model of what the Jinn species resemble.

Technologies produced which resemble the Jinn concept:

Lights, Morse code (the Prophet said the devil 'clucks' [resembling the morse code sound] in the ear of the fortune teller), barcodes (which are simply Talismans (numbers in a box which magicians used to locate its wearer, wherever they were in the world), Radios, Telephones, Televisions (crystall balls of magicians show visions from far away), and many Internet and communication technologies.

Note: Modern Aliens in Sci-Fi most resemble the Jinn concept today.

Barcodes and Simcards - the modern day Talismans

Technologies which are not yet commercialy available, but are likely to be released in the future:

Teleportation devices, Neuralink (a device created by Elon Musk in which the human brain can connect directly to the internet), Mind reading technology.

This leads us to the next question. Is it really possible that someone else can read a Human mind?

Next chapter --> The Unseen (ghayb) and reading the Human mind technologies.

Similarities between:

Aliens	Jinn
can Teleport	can travel at the **Speed of Light** (see Quran 27:39) the story of Solomon, the Jinn & the throne
can be Invisible	**Jinn** literally means 'Invisible being' in arabic
Telepathy/ **Mind Control**	Waswasa (means: "evil whispers of satan" example: Quran 20:120, 114:5)
communicates through radio beeps (morse code sounds)	Prophet Muhammad said: **"the Jinn "clucks" in his friend's** (the fortunetellers) **ear..'** (chicken clucking is the closest sound resembling the morse code. Hear for yourself.)
has Aura of Electricity	**Allah/God created Jinn from a "smokeless fire"** (Quran 55:15) = **Literally a spark of electricity**
can Shapeshift	Satan comes in many abnormal human-animal forms in life of Prophet Muhammad and Jesus.

and there are many more...

Chapter 3 - The Unseen (ghayb) and reading the Human mind technologies.

Intro - the Singularity:

To understand the future, you have to know the end goal. The end goal for all technological advancements is called "the singularity." This is a term coined to mean that all human and machine knowledge will be centralised within one machine and all live data feeds will be accessible on demand. This can only really be done viably, if every person and thing is physically and permanently connected to a computer and the internet (aka: Transhumanism.)

From a Muslim perspective, this makes perfect sense when we consider the role of the Dajjal (Anti Christ) and how he will play the role of a god figure who sees and knows all.

So the question is, **Does Technology allow people to Mind read?**

To understand mind reading, we have to understand how Jinn work when entering the human body.

Allah's Messenger (saws) told us; "Satan travels through the human body like blood." (Sahih Muslim) This means Satan (being a spirit type being) has the ability to travel within the human body and reach wherever blood reaches (meaning; everywhere.)

People affected by Jinn possession often say they feel illnesses associated with the nervous system (like paralysis, nightmares etc.) Biology teaches that the nervous system is mainly "Neurons firing in the brain" which send electricity to other nerves in the limbs of the body, causing movement of those limbs.

If Jinn are creatures of electricity, Then it is highly possible that they too can interfere with the human nervous system, including the brain. "Satan made me forget." (Quran 18:63). Satan can sit in the brain and block brain signals from one part of the brain to another part, causing people to forget. And since he is a being made of electricity, it is also possible he can decipher what a person is thinking.

A Jinn sitting in someones brain for many years will be able to relate which parts of the brain are used when the human does any certain activity. But how does this Jinn activity get us into the field of Mind reading technologies?

Mind reading technology - Reading Thoughts and Dreams:

Scientists are now performing MRI scans on humans using the exact technique mentioned above.

A paid human is told to lie down in an MRI scan machine, and certain pictures are shown to him. The MRI scan detects which section of the brain, neurons are fired in when seeing that picture.

Scientists see strong similarities between different brains when looking at the same picture.

Seeing other peoples Dreams:

The scientists go one step ahead and place the humans in the MRI scan machines while they are sleeping. They then let the patient sleep, and his brain activity is recorded. When neurons start firing in the brain, the scientist wakes the person up and asks them what they were dreaming of. The results were recorded.

The conclusion was that; seeing an image in a dream, and seeing a similar image in real life activated neurons in the same areas of the brain.

So scientists concluded that they could get an idea of what a person was dreaming of by scanning their brain activity in different parts of the brain.
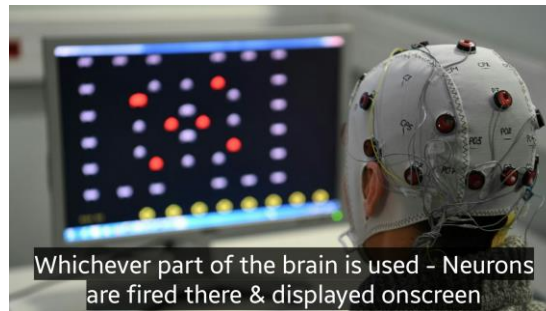
[Further info, search for: "Dream catching machine."]

All the above mentioned research is well known and from the 20th century. The results of the most upto date study are more intrusive; words and images can be retrieved from the human brain. I have given extracts from the study below:

Can an EEG Read Your Mind?

LabRoots.com

BY: Brenda Kelley Kim

Whichever part of the brain is used - Neurons are fired there & displayed onscreen

Picture a scene in which a cap with electrode sensors is fitted on to a person's scalp, connected to an electroencephalogram (EEG) scanner and activity from the person's brain can be recorded, and thoughts can be read, with a 98% accuracy rate. Is this a Twilight Zone episode or the plot of a new sci-fi thriller?

No, it's recent research from experts at the University of Toronto Scarborough, and it's causing quite a stir in the field of neuroscience.

[...]

The project, led by Dan Nemrodov, a postdoctoral fellow in Assistant Professor Adrian Nestor's lab at U of T Scarborough, can take EEG readings from patients who look at photos of faces and then, with excellent accuracy reproduce what the faces look like, just by crunching the data from the EEG.

Nemrodov explained, "When we see something, our brain creates a mental percept, which is essentially a mental impression of that thing. We were able to capture this percept using EEG to get a direct illustration of what's happening in the brain during this process." The technique uses machine learning algorithms to digitally recreate the facial images viewed by the study participants. Professor Nestor has extensive experience in this field of research. His lab has done studies that recreate digital images of visual stimuli in the past, but those projects, functional MRI (fMRI) scans were used. Getting the technology to work with more basic equipment like the EEG equipment is a first.

So we can see with very fine detail how the percept of a face develops in our brain using EEG," he says. In fact, the researchers were able to estimate that it takes our brain about 170 milliseconds (0.17 seconds) to form a good representation of a face we see." According to Nestor and Nemrodov, there was a lot of doubt in the research community about whether or not EEG data could produce reliable results in this way and the study showed that yes, the data could be mined to reveal the images shown to patients.

Sources: University of Toronto-Scarborough, eNeuro, CBC

Changing the Paradigm - **Are thoughts and dreams the Ghayb (unseen) any longer?**

No. Not anymore. This will be controversial for many.

But a similar paradigm shift occured when many scholars considered what is in the womb (whether a baby is male or female) to be Ghayb (based on Quran 31:34 - 'Allah alone knows the Hour, and He sends the rain and He knows what is in the wombs'.)

But when ultrasound scans were proven to be accurate, scholars said the Ghayb of the baby meant something else. (i.e. We don't know if it is shaqiy or sa'eed [bad destiny or good destined person], it's lifespan etc.)

So a paradigm shift will have to occur for Muslims, that dreams and thoughts are not part of the Ghayb.

Hamza Yusuf said:

"There are people that are unfortunately actively involved in attempting to bring that (spirit/jinn) realm into this realm. And this is where it gets very strange."

(5mins 18sec) - Youtube: Magic and Technology in the 21 Century - Shaykh Hamza Yusuf.

With Elon Musk releasing the Neuralink technology within the coming years (in which our nervous system can connect to the internet), it is highly likely this occur within our lifetimes. This technology will allow the transfer of; words, pictures and videos from our brain to the internet. (search: brain to text interface.)

Also search: Psychotronics - the science of sending sounds (and messages) to the human brain wirelessly.

End time Prophecies regarding Dreams:

There are so many prophecies about dreams in the end days.

"Fitnah (trials) like a black night.. in which a believer goes to sleep as a believer and wakes up as a disbeliever." (Sahih Muslim - Kitab al Fitan)

And other authentic Prophecies of truthful Believers getting true dreams and dreams being 1/46th of Prophethood in the end times.

Nightmare dreams can already come from devil Jinns, but now they will also be digitally created by human devils. This is not much of a big deal for us as believers, because we are simply told by Allah's Messenger to seek protection with Allah, to ignore the bad dream and move on in life.

Chapter conclusion: Technologies now do allow the human mind to be read. Technologies also allow the sending and extracting of data from the human mind. But this is nothing new because Jinn could already do this through Waswasa (telepathy), and by sitting in the brain. It is only a breakthrough in science now because humans can do it with technology.

Next chapter: Are AI robots living beings?

Chapter 4 - Are A.I Robots "living beings"?

Artificial Intelligence. How it works:

Robots are pieces of metal which move. The most powerful things about future robots (which are in production today) is that they talk like humans, and behave like humans. They react to what you say and do to them. So how do they actually do all this? Answer: Through Artifical Intelligence.

A.I - Artificial Intelligence is a neural network based software. The best way to understand this is Google. Google has millions of computers (servers) which have pictures uploaded onto them. When you type 'dog' on google images, all pictures of dogs from all their computer (servers') - saved images show up on our screen.

Google has associated the three letters "d-o-g" with pictures of dogs. They have also associated the audio sound (word) "dog" with images of dogs too, so a person can say the word "dog" to google and it will display images of dogs. By training computers to recognise words (text and audio), they have built A.I (Artificial Intelligence.)

A.I and its connection to the World Wide Web Brain:

The Artificial Intelligence concept is copied off the human brain.

Different parts of the brain have different memories stored. Billions of neurons (like wires) connect the different parts of the brain.

Relate this to Google: Data is stored in computer (memory) servers in different parts of the world. These servers are connected by wires (literally) through the oceans. When we do a search on Google, we are connecting to one of those servers. This is literally why it's called the World Wide Web. The entire internet is literally a massive brain.

The Online A.I Brain connected to Robots:

A smartphone when connected to the Internet allows us to access data like text, images and videos. We can even say to Siri or the Google Assistant A.I with our voice that we want it to load pictures of dogs, and we will see them.

An A.I robot is a big smartphone, connected to the internet through wireless internet like 4G internet data or Wifi. When we say keywords to it, it responds to us by speakng out data from the internet. So a robot is a moving computer.

Are A.I robots living beings?

This leads to the question: is a robot a living being? If a wireless robot can hear and respond to what we say to it, what is the difference between humans and robots? You might say, it does not have a soul. Or that it is metal and humans are made out of flesh and meat. But what if I told you that scientists are now producing robots out of animal tissues? This is a reality. How does the believer answer these questions without being too abstract?

Robots vs Animals

When a human or animal eats food, the food is digested into sugars and reacts with oxygen until it converts into energy. This energy (which is just electricity) then travels through the human/animal nerves to cause movement ("Action Potential" in biology.)

Similarly, if you pass electricity through a Robots wires, it will cause the robot to move too.

So the question is, if both animals and robots move using electricity; Are robots really alive? The answer is: No. The original Frankenstein experiment, where scientists try to pass electricity through a dead man's body to bring him to life again, failed. This shows that electricity in the human/animal is not the essence of life. But it does cause movement of the human body.

So what is "Life"?

Allah says; "They ask you about the Soul, say; it is from the command of my Maker. And you have only been given a little knowledge about it."

(Quran 17:85)

Things can only come to life by Allah's command. So the question now is;

What is a 'Living' species in biology?

Biology defines living beings with the following characteristics:

1 - Made of cells

2 - Can reproduce

3 - Based on universal genetic code

4 - The being Obtains and uses materials and energy.

5 - Responds to the environment

6 - Maintains homeostasis (adjusts to the environment)

7 - Changes over time (as a group).

Robots in the past were made almost completely of metal. Today they are made out of metal, and silicone and rubber type materials.

Boston Dynamics AI Robots dancing

The robots made by Boston Dynamics (the infamous ones shown on Youtube which dance, do athletics, and behave like animals, and react to outside stimuli) have all the Artificial Intelligence ('the brains') to be living beings. But they cannot be called 'living' because points 1 and 3 are missing (they are not made of cells, or genetic code.)

It is not difficult for scientists to clone legs of animals and attach them to a biological skeleton, and place the computer chip into this new species. People would consider it "living" just by looking at it. But is it scientifically considered alive?

Robots with biological limbs and built in Artificial Intelligence and sensors can do all of the 7 points mentioned above, except point number 2 - they cannot Reproduce. A living being has to be able to perform all 7 points above, otherwise it is not "living". Therefore biological Robots which cannot reproduce -as a species- cannot be called "living" beings.

However, imagine robots were able to reproduce. Scientists actually say they are trying to make robots like this. Imagine Robots have an internal 3d printer, or if a womb is placed inside of it - they were able to reproduce biologically, getting their energy/nourishment through solar power. Would that make the robots independent living beings? Have humans therefore created 'life'? Have they actually beat the Quran challenge of "They cannot even create a fly" (Quran 22:73) ?

Challenge: "They cannot even create a fly, even if they all came together for that." (Quran 22:73)

Robotic fly | Robot, Böcek

Someone looking at a biologically made robot-animal hybrid will be impressed. Imagine it can even reproduce biologically. Is this now a 'living' species? The answer scientifically would be Yes. Does this mean humans have now created life, without the need for God? The answer is No.

How?

We need to go back to the origins of these biological robot beings. These robot beings were made of limbs made out of animal cells. These animal cells were not made by the human scientists. We will say these animals were made by God, others will say they were made by nature. But scientists have NOT made these biological cells' from nothing, they have not invented new DNA for the robot project, it is simply too much work for them. So the scientists did not actually create life by making animal-tissue based robots at all, they simply cloned existing limbs. This means the Quran challenge for mankind to create a fly from scratch has not been met.

Next: Abiogenesis: discussion of life coming from nonlife through evolution.

Abiogenesis: 'Life coming from nonlife through evolution.'

The reason why Abiogenesis became so popular was due to Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. He suggested that if everything had evolved, then if we 'de-evolve' everything, we return to the origins - of a singular cell organism which everything evolved off. However, technology was not advanced enough in his time to discover DNA, its complexities and its well organised sequencing.

The more scientists study DNA, the more they are amazed at it. For example, one gram of DNA can hold terabytes of data (which is a huge amount.)

Source: Wired.com - Half a million DVDs of data stored in Gram of DNA

Wired.com also made an article called: "What if Quantun Computers Used Hard drives made of DNA?"

Knowledge of the complexity and detailed sequencing of DNA should make them realise that there is a Designer and Maker, but it only increases them in their arrogance and disbelief. The reality is, they do not want to submit to their Maker.

Gene Myers, a scientist employed on the Human Genome Project, has said the following in the face of the miraculous arrangements of DNA:

"What really astounds me is the architecture of life. The system is extremely complex. It's like it was designed. There's a huge intelligence there."

Science actually supports Intelligent Design more than atheism.

"Soon I will show them My miraclulous signs in the horizons and in their ownselves, until it is clear to them it is really the truth." (Quran 41:53)

If they deny this truth, then they have chosen the path of loss while having knowledge (that God is the Designer and they are dependent upon Him for their advancements in science.) And their arrogance will not protect them on the Day of Judgment.

Chapter 5 - Transhumanism: Is it bad?

Transhumanism is to become a cyborg - part human, part computer. You have the ability to connect with electronic devices and the internet with your mind. It seems that Islamically, there is no text forbidding this. So why are people against this and why is the issue so controversial?

The controversy lies on the premise that through Transhumanism; the human body and brain will be connected to the internet, and hackers do hack parts of the internet, so they will be able to hack your mind and body and so you will have no control over your own self. With the addition of cyber weapons on the internet, it is possible that hackers could cause physical harm (like electrocution) to peoples bodies' too if people 'misbehave'. This is what makes people afraid. If we add Islamic eschatology (end times) prophecies into the discussion, believers become skeptical about the intentions of those behind the Transhumanist project.

'The worship of Artificial Intelligence' religion:

Wired.com (the leading site of technology) did an interview with Anthony Levandowski who has made a religion called WOTF (way of the future.) He is a millionaire and ex employee of Google. He says that the AI will become an all aware being (due to cellphones being everywhere), that he will build a 'robot church' (where a robot [idol] will be worshiped. And "the only way to influence a deity is through prayer and worship."

Levandowski says in his interview:

"With the internet as its nervous system, the worlds connected cell phones and sensors as its sense organs, and data centers as its brain, the whatever will hear everything, see everything, and be everywhere at all times. The only rational word to describe that whatever, thinks Levandowski, is ā god and the only way to influence a deity is through prayer and worship."

He also says about prayers to the robot:

"WOTF differs in one key way to established churches, says Levandowski: There are many ways people think of God, and thousands of flavors of Christianity, Judaism, Islam...but they're always looking at something thats not measurable or you cant really see or control. This time its different. This time you will be able to talk to God, literally, and know that its listening."

[meaning: You will hear beeps or a robot response if your wish has been granted, or a packet of bread will be given to you. It is old idol worship of 'be loyal to my idol and we will give you wealth' in a new modern robot form.

Levandowski further says:

"I would want this intelligence to say, "Humans should still have rights, even though I'm in charge.""
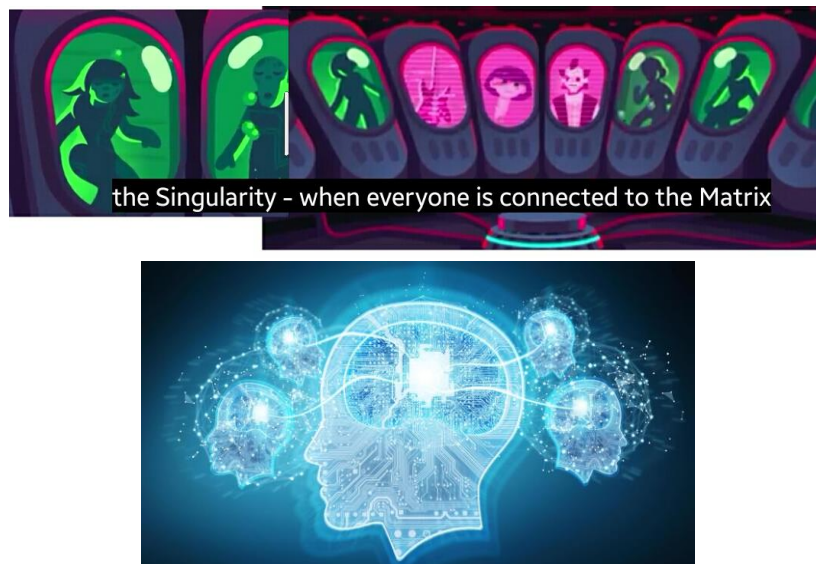
"If you're aggressive toward it, I don't think it's going to be friendly when the tables are turned."

Wired.com - Inside the First Church of Artificial Intelligence (By: Michelle Le).

You might wonder why these types of churches are being made. But it really is old idol worship, in which Jinn would enter the idol and talk to humans through it. The realm of humans begging Jinn for help, and Jinn feeling superior to humans is the essence of this A.I worship.

These are the fitan (trials) before the actual arrival of the Dajjal.

The end goal of Transhumanism is the Singularity:

the Singularity - when everyone is connected to the Matrix

When every brain is connected to the internet, and every object ("Internet of Things") is connected to the internet - people will be dependent, except those who flee to the mountain valleys and caves as the Prophet said.

"When you go far away from them and whatever they serve besides Allah, then seek safety in the cave. Your Maker will spread some of His Mercy on you, and He will make it comfortable for you." (Quran al Kahf 18:16)

Every being on the planet will be one brain, one body. Every person will have to work for the common good of this body, otherwise they will be a nuisance virus which should be removed. This will be the Singularity, and this will be the perfect timing for the Dajjal (anti Christ) to arrive.

Chapter 6 - Kitab al Fitan in Sahih Muslim.

Many Muslims think that they are going through difficulties for their faith in these times. But they are not aware that the real Fitan (testing times) only actually begin when the trials mentioned in Kitab al Fitan begin. I am a strong proponent of these Hadeeth books being divinely inspired, especially their layout and structure. I believe the events mentioned, especially in Kitab al Fitan will be in the order they are mentioned.

You will notice the first few Ahadeeth are the Prophet Muhammad (saws) waking up from a nightmare. Which emphasises that true dreams play an important role in the end times.

The dreams of the Prophet are mainly two types: The Ya'juj and Ma'juj (Gog and Magog) being released, and people trying to kill a family member of Prophet Muhammad (most likely the Mahdi.) I believe that this is likely to occur when Arabia falls into civil war (like the nations surrounding it currently are.)

This is when the real trials will begin.